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Department of State

TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL 854

EXCISE

7-22-71 Saigon 11601

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ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 UPW-01 IO-16
RSR-01 /109 W
013884

R 221140Z JUL 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7662
INFO AMEMBASSY
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/IRRC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11601

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

KATHMANDU FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

1. SUMMARY: THE SUPREME COURT JULY 17 ANNOUNCED THE DATES OF THE PERIOD FOR FILING OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES. LOWER HOUSE DEPUTY HO VAN MINH INDICATED TO THE PRESS ON JULY 19 THAT HE MIGHT BE GENERAL DOUNG VAN MINH'S VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE. ON JULY 18 THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT TO PROTEST RIGGED ELECTIONS URGED PRESIDENT THIEU NOT TO SEEK A SECOND TERM IN OFFICE. END SUMMARY

2. SUPREME COURT DECISION: THE SUPREME COURT ANNOUNCED JULY 17 THAT THE FILING PERIOD FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES BEGINS AT 8:00 A.M. JULY 29 AND ENDS AT 6:00 P.M. AUGUST 4. THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION CLARIFIES AN OVERSIGHT IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION LAW WHICH HAD FAILED TO DESIGNATE THE DAY ON WHICH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES COULD BEGIN TO BE FILED.

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EM HO VAN MINH: IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LOCAL PRESS JULY 19 DEPUTY HO VAN MINH, FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE LOWER HOUSE AND KEY ASSOCIATE OF DOUNG VAN MINH IMPLIED THAT HE MAY BE THE GENERAL'S VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE. MINH STATED THAT "HE HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH GENERAL MINH" BUT THAT "THERE HAD NOT YET BEEN A FINAL DECISION," BUT WHEN ON TO IMPLY THAT HE MIGHT JOINT THE TICKET. DEPUTY MINH ALSO SAID THAT HE SAW "NO SIGN YET" OF AN "HONEST AND IMPARTIAL ELECTION" AND ADDED THAT HE AGREED WITH A JULY 19 STATEMENT BY VICE PRESIDENT KY IN WHICH KY SAID THAT ELECTORAL HONESTY " DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON THE WISHES OF PRESIDENT THIEU."

4. THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT TO OPPOSE RIGGED ELECTIONS: IN ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT, THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT TO OPPOSE RIGGED ELECTIONS HELD ITS FORMAL DEBUT AT THE AN QUANG PAGODA, JULY 18. IN THE OPENING ADDRESS, LEFTIST LAWYER TRAN NGOC LIENG, GROUP CHAIRMAN AND GENERAL MINH'S 1967 VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE, REPORTEDLY URGED PRESIDENT THIEU NOT TO SEEK A SECOND TERM IN OFFICE AND DEPLORED RIGGED ELECTIONS THROUGH WHICH "FOREIGNERS" IMPOSE ON THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE "TALENTLESS LEADERS" WHO "KNOW ONLY HOW TO SERVE IMPERIALIST INTERESTS." LIENG ALSO ACCUSED OFFICIALS OF EFFECTING "ALL SORTS OF MANEUVERS TO BRIBE VOTERS, THREATEN, PRESSURE AND OTHERWISE RIG THE ELECTIONS." WHILE APPARENTLY NO SENIOR BUDDHIST LEADERS ATTENDED THE CEREMONY, SOME LOCAL PAPERS REPORTED THAT OTHER GUESTS INCLUDED SUCH PROMINENT SUPPORTERS OF GENERAL MINH AS SENATOR HONG SON DONG, VU VAN MAU, AND TRAN QUANG THUAN.
BERGER

DECLASSIFIED